
LINES IN THE SAND.

RICHARD E. DAY.

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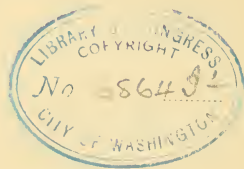
LINES IN THE SAND.



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BY
RICHARD E. DAY

63



SYRACUSE, N. Y.
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PUBLISHERS' APOLOGY.

OUR only reason for collecting in a volume a few of our brother's early miscellaneous productions in verse is the conviction that their merits entitle them to more extensive and lasting appreciation than they could possibly attain through casual publication in the local press, and a belief that many of his personal friends, for whom this limited edition is chiefly intended, will be pleased to possess the little book as a *souvenir*.

The poems have been selected at random from a large budget placed at our disposal; the arrangement is, with few exceptions, in the order of production.

Most of them were written while the author was pursuing a University course of study, supporting himself in the mean time by teaching, and performing sundry other literary work.

DELTA UPSILON HALL,
SYRACUSE, 31st May, 1878.

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LINES IN THE SAND.

Lines in the Sand.

WHILE Life's strong ocean hushed its restless
throbs,
While crept its tides into their caves with sobs,
I've loved to kneel, and on the strand
Write many a vow and many a hope
And many an aspiration grand ;
Then wander on the pebbly slope
Till tide expunged my passion and my vow—
Till Time smoothed out such wrinkles from his brow.

'Twas some relief to stray from men apart,
And make the sands a copy of my heart,
To mix the cadence of the seas
With my lament or vocal joy,
To mix the ocean's sympathies
With fears that sink or hopes that buoy,

To pledge my recreant soul to truth again,
And wait the sanction of his soul's amen.

'Twas not in vain ; for I a charm have learned,
That soothes me when betrayed, by Fortune spurned ;
Nor vain again these lines to trace,
If thou shalt learn, when visions cheat,
To hide thee close in Art's embrace,
And spurn the world from 'neath thy feet.
I mourned—and Poesy hath set me free.
Thou mournest ? She hath solace too for thee.

And yet, though never mourner bless this line,
Nor warm his heart in beams that fall from mine,
Should one kind critic, 'mid the throng
That passes ere the tide comes in,
But read the song within my song,
Not profitless my work hath been ;
For though no name is joined in weal or ill
With these sad rhymes, they're dedicated still.

Mens Omnia Vincit.

ALL things are conquered by the high resolve,
'Tis action's essence, action's soul and core.
So doth the captive wheel of fate revolve
That genius gathers what it won before.

Whoe'er has heard the notes of fame, and felt
The twisted leaflets press his weary brow,
Was victor when beneath the stars he knelt
And told to heav'n ambition's early vow.

Tho' torrent streams oppose their noisy wrath,
And thunders bid Ambition's voice be still,
Yet mountains shall be crumbled in his path,
And storms retreat before the human will.

Not, like Mazeppa on a reinless steed,
Is man bound captive to a hopeless state;
For destiny he spurs, or checks his speed,
And vaults to glory on the back of fate.

The heav'ns are opened to a daring soul,
The clouds are parted by the eagle's flight;
The zenith is alone man's worthy goal,
And stars are but to serve his path with light.

" He builds too low " who roofs his temple in,
" He builds too low " who builds but to the stars;
And he who rests content if heav'n he win,
May find the golden gates his prison-bars.

Forest Musings.

WHO loves not into forest depths to stray,
Where sinks in mellow gloom the golden day—
The soft, uncertain light which trembles o'er
The diver's path on ocean's threshing-floor,
Or holy rays, descending through the high
Cathedral window, tempered to the kneeler's eye?

The air and earth with energy are rife;
Around me moves the masquerade of life;
It gushes in the robin's blithesome song,
It surges thro' the maple, free and strong,
Its warm blood thro' a thousand arteries sweeps,
For here doth Nature's heart beat strong, tho' Nature
sleeps.

God buildeth here a temple to himself,
'Thout sound of hammer or the chink of pelf;

Not half so grand St. Peter's columns rise,
Less gracefully its spires salute the skies.
No impious offering this of mitred knaves,
Its wealth distilled from sweat of hinds and blood of
slaves!

When Greeks, Prometheus-like, the heavens trod,
Stole fire and stole the functions of a god,
When Grecian Fancy her bright colors wove,
Fauns, satyrs, naiads lurked in every grove.
They're gone; but, in the fountain and the tree,
A presence haunts the poet still, haunts even me.

Ere men, by science taught, their dream-born love
Had spurned, from Persia's far enchanted shore
To Caledonia's glens, the faeries' reign
Was o'er the wild-wood; here they led their train;
Their zephyr music broke the forest calm,
Their light steps beat the sound on many a leaflet's palm

Tho' Reason shatter Fancy's rainbow crown,
And rudely sweep her cobweb castles down,
Enchantment lingers still in every dell;
She broke the wand, but could not break the spell;
Titania and Oberon are here;
Their charm is on my heart, their voice is on mine ear.

Oft in the wood has knelt God's holy seer,
While inspiration's song fell on his ear.
Earth fades, and Heaven gathers round him now :
A harp angelic seems each waving bough ;
'Tis not the sound of leaves, but noise of wings ;
The wild-bird carols free, and lo ! an angel sings !

Ad Amorem.

THERE'S a Vestal more fair than the Vestals of
yore ;
I've pondered her doctrines, I've lisped in her lore ;
A secular priestess ordained from above,
Her temple each heart consecrated to love.

Her mysteries never the vulgar may view ;
Her rites are the same that our first parents knew ;
The flame on her altar, in Paradise fired
When they fell, blazes still and has never expired.

She preaches to hearts, not to logical ears ;
Her offerings are kisses, her baptism tears ;
Bright eyes are her lamps, and the worshiper bows
'Mid the music of whispers and incense of vows.

O, sad little bigot ! She makes the heart bleed
That sneers at her service or laughs at her creed ;
Who rebels 'gainst her rubric she dooms not to death,
For a kiss brings the heretic back to his faith.

Consolations of the New Faith.

“You and I shall (have) fade(d), like streaks of morning cloud, into the infinite azure of the past.”

The Belfast Revelator.

WHAT'S the life of yon cloud, for a moment re-
vealed

To the eye,
As it waves its white wing o'er the dense azure field
Of the sky ?
'Tis but spray flung to heaven by ocean, the crown—
Aye the breath
Of a billow, that soon in the trough shall sink down
It calls death.

'Tho' I dot for a moment the awful expanse,
I but seem ;
Walk in grief's solemn measure or passion's sweet trance
'Tis a dream ;

Talk of duty and hope, toil for fame's thrilling shout,—
In a shroud ;
'Tis a song, 'tis a laugh, a few heart-beats, then out,—
Like a cloud.

Sad and lone is yon cloud in the canopy drear,
Lone and sad ;
For the sky cannot love it, the sun cannot cheer
Or make glad ;
For 'tis not of the sun, tho' it plunge in his flame
Bright and strong,
Nor the sky, but of ocean, and ocean shall claim
It ere long.

Sadder far this sad heart, while grim fate bids it stay
'Mid the waste
Of this desolate life, where its pleasures decay
Ere it taste.
Pale with terror, I hang o'er the dark, sounding wave
Of that sea ;
Ah ! the infinite life which hath borne me my grave
Soon shall be.

Two Secrets.

I MAY never behold thee, blue ocean,
Never list to thy deep waters' roll ;
All too feebly thy music and motion
Fancy forms on the sense of the soul ;
But I've heard of the tides ebbing, swelling,
Of the dull, weary wash of the main ;
And the moan to the bending skies telling
The tale of thy bosom's calm pain.

Yet I've stood by a sea in its dashing—
By an ocean more calm and sublime ;
I have heard the sad sound of its splashing,
Of its billows I've heard the sad chime ;
Well I know that its currents are stronger,
That more solemn and grand is its roar,
That the sweep of its coast-line is longer,
That it beats on some infinite shore.

'Tis the heart with its pulsing and leaping
And chafing which never subsides ;
'Tis the heart when affection is sweeping
Its surface and stirring its tides.
Waves of anguish roll on—ah, their madness—
Tides of longing rush up from the deep ;
Panting heart, sobbing heart, ah, thy sadness !
Weary heart, all too weary to sleep.

This poem the last wavelet, dying,
Has laid, like a shell, at my feet ;
And the same dreary chant it is sighing
Which the lips of its ocean repeat.
Of the lustre emotion threw round it
None the breath of the critic has left,
Like a shell, gone the sea-dew which crowned it,
Of its glistening beauty bereft.

Thoughts like sea-birds that roam, resting never,
Mem'ries drifting, like weeds, to the strand,
Fears that move the dark waters forever,
Waves of pain softly beating the sand ;
Hopes, like flickering beacons, low burning,
Sighs that float through the heart's tender psalm,
Love can still ev'ry cry, ev'ry yearning,
And whisper to tempests a calm.

Now I carry thy secret, blue ocean,
And thy secret is like to mine own ;
I have read the deep cause of thy motion
And the prayer that comes up in thy moan :
'Tis for love thou art wailing to heaven,
Love alone can bring peace to thy breast ;
Tides that surge in my bosom have given
A key to unlock thy unrest.

My Treasure.

ONE damp, drear day there came to me from heaven,
Adown a rainbow harp in joy
Descending
A hope, and clouds that draped my eyes were riven,
As glad I yielded to her coy
Befriending ;
O'er seas of glass she led my willing feet,
And then came jealous Death our sweet
Dream ending.

He chilled the clay I loved to marble cold,
Yet wrapt decay in Beauty's pall
To mask it,
And left me ling'ring by the saintly mold,
That breathes no answering word to all
I ask it ;

For Death has stol'n the gem—the fleeting wraith,
I deck with evergreens of faith
The casket.

There is a curtained chamber in the soul.
There safe I've garnered and for aye
Life's token ;
Where stillness holds a vast and deep control,
And whispers, awed, die hushed away
Unspoken ;
Where shadows dance to mem'ry's yellow ray,
In twilight ne'er the flush of day
Hath broken.

Here lifeless Hope, from blemish of decay
The heart's pure air thy beauty's trace
Is keeping ;
The heart's sweet rays across thy features play
Like Ocean's o'er a mermaid's face
While sleeping.
But ah ! no smile of hers to warm this place,
No smile of olden love to chase
My weeping.

Here let me quaff oblivion's honeyed wine.
Back ! cruel world ! thou com'st not here
To sever

My spirit fingers from their spirit shrine
And drive me from this sacred bier.
Ah! never
Shall Time or Fate our last embrace untwine.
Fair, perished Hope, I clasp thee mine,
Forever!

Who Shuns the Light Doth Court the Gloom.

WHO shuns the light doth court the gloom ;
Who shuts out God prepares his tomb,
And sets the stone which seals its mouth ;
Who opes his windows to the North
Ne'er feels the radiant sun come forth,
Which waits to greet him in the South.

We build our house 'mid clouds and mists,
We fashion fetters for our wrists,
Then mourn the ruthless bonds of fate.
We reared these walls which hedge us in,
We forged these bolts and chains of sin,
We mured the soul in dungeon grate.

No beams can lumine moral death,
No clouds can darken perfect faith ;
We cast the shadows, God the light.
Oh ! what to him these stormy years

Who finds a rainbow in his tears,
And learns that tears may quicken sight!

Oh! would we leave these souls ajar,
His smile would flood them like a star,
And melt our winter into spring;
'Twould kindle faith's extinguished fire,
And hearts, like stones by Orpheus' lyre
Once touched, forever more would sing.

What captive hates the ray which falls
In mercy on his pallid walls,
And strives his joyless heart to win?
O weeping captive, chained to doubt,
Unbar thy soul, drive shadows out,
And let the God of sunshine in.

Jacob's Ladder.

SOMETIMES in dreams God's thoughts we
scan—

The thoughts that bridge the coming years—
The bridge that links with glittering span
The future's dusky piers.

So Jacob in the long ago,
In prophet's robe of starry beams,
Lay fast'ning Heaven to Earth below
With web he wove from dreams.

Adown the little web which swings
Between my dreamy soul and Thee,
O God, thine angel glides and brings
Of Jacob's dream the key.

It was that perfect age whose hue
Gilds many a myth-land of the past

And future, on the prophet's view
That swept serene and vast.

A land toward which we float on tears,
Scarce known to Thought's knight-errant lance,
The hope, the agony of years,
Loomed forth in tropic trance.

It is not day, it is not night,
But something gladder, holier still;
The atmosphere is drenched with light,
Baptized each peak and hill.

Harp-strains in torrent burst descend,
While skyward leap, like fountains strong,
Earth's noises. Lo! they meet, and blend
Mankind's triumphal song;

While manhood's blood and woman's tears,
The prophet's song, the martyr's sighs,
The hero's hopes, the freeman's fears
One pillared ladder rise.

Amid the throng whose glancing feet
Swept down the gleaming strands he wove,
See! faces old! See! faces sweet—
Faith, Hope, Truth, Goodness, Love!

And one full many a lip has prayed
To welcome in her hour of birth,
Peace, floated down and gently laid
Her branch upon the earth.

That hour more beauteous seemed the real,
Transfigured to its Eden youth,
While clear and strong stood the ideal
In bold relief of truth.

Ideas darting, like the stars,
Through man's dark firmament a ray,
Dissolve, as Morn the east unbars,
In yellow waves of day.

For what are stars if Helios now
Ride up the heav'ns on fulgent car?
A million gems fall from his brow,
And every gem a star.

Now Reason treads where Fancy trod;
Lo! Reason leads where Faith has led,
Till on the bosom of his God
He rests his weary head.

And they who in the garden go
To sweat, and bear on aching breast

The world's dark sin, the world's long woe,
Partake the world's deep rest.

And saw he Israel ere he woke,
Transformed to nobler life and creed,
Triumphant o'er its curse and yoke,
From scorn of nations freed ?

On towers of stone man seeks to rise
No more above the floods he fears ;
But ever toward the beck'ning skies
A Spirit-Babel rears.

Crucify.

THE heart is blind: its tendrils bursting forth
Entwine alike the good and bad of earth,
And, severed by the will's harsh pruning-knife,
They ever sadly drip their sap of life.

Then pain is dumb, not dead, though pride its wail
Has choked and clad the heart in worldly mail;
A pulse of fire in Earth's calm breast doth beat,
And yon white star is pale with very heat.

The motto of our lives is crucify;
Each day some fond, sweet thing we doom to die,
'Till over mem'ry's grave-yard, gleaming white
With skeletons, Golgotha could we write.

To ev'ry heart, heard by that heart alone,
There falls a voice from heav'n in gracious tone:
Two words it utters, "crucify!" and "climb!"
In these is all of life that is sublime.

Where, seen through clouds, as through a mountain
pass,
The blue expanse spreads like a lake of glass,
Where to thy gaze benignly arches down
The infinite, a path leads to a crown.

From crowns we lose He weaves the crowns we gain ;
Our cup of joy distils He from our pain ;
The azure path which climbs upon the skies
And wanders through the stars is—*sacrifice*.

Con not that weary word at eve and morn,
Like some old book with pages thumb'd and torn !
Go, set thy sail to heaven's favoring breath,
And sell the world for that which mocks at death.

To build thy life in beauty be thy work !
Within, and not without, the foemen lurk ;
The beasts that threat thee sleep within the lair
Of thine own breast, and thou must seek them there.

The Fool's Choice.

“**L**IFE is a banquet Nature spreads for man,
And spreads but once. Then who her fruit and
wine

Would scorn, are fools and know not Nature's plan.
To feast is worship and to eat divine.
We lay no sweeter gift upon her shrine
Than laughter. This is homage, true, devout.
Then let the dance and revel still be mine—
Till Death shall put my little taper out,
Till life to ashes sinks. And yet sometimes I doubt.

“For whence the hope which warbles o'er the grave,
That time shall fill again our glass with sand?
Why list we ever to the splashing wave?
Why wander ever up and down the strand?
Why reach we out so oft a searching hand,
To try what shivering storms the silence thresh,
To clasp the darkness of that nether land,

Until some outer blast blows icy-fresh,
And then shrink frightened back within our walls of
flesh ?

“Delusion. Springs no flower from the tomb
Save those Affection’s hand has planted there.
We call—our voices echo down the gloom,
We gaze—our torches sicken in its air;
Yet walks the Christian down the silent stair,
While harsh the ever-swinging portal jars,
With smile of peaceful trust, as one may wear
Who seeks his rest at eve by light of stars—
Till birds salute the sun thro’ night’s dissolving bars.

“’Twill never dawn. There is no time but time,
No other space than that wherein we dwell,
Than pleasure’s bloom no higher heaven we climb,
Than its decay there is no deeper hell.
Then, hopes that lure toward empty skies, farewell!
Down! fears that bay my heart incessant, down!
Joy rings a silvery Lethe from her bell,
And in her cup the thoughts that plague I’ll drown.
Come, Liberty, and crown me with my selfhood’s
crown.”

Thus spake the atheist. The Spirit heard,
And noiseless stole away. Ah! ’twill implore

With sad, sweet voice,—the shadows shall be stirred
By holy God-light, creeping thro' the door
Of that dark bosom—never—nevermore.
He wooed the goddess, Pleasure, fools applaud,
And clasped a cloud, as fools have clasped before,
He sought and won the liberty they laud—
Void vacancy which weeps an ever-vanished God.

Niagara.

MAJESTIC archer! Scarce more swiftly fly
Electric rivers, in their earthward flow,
That leap thro' sulphur spray th' abyss of sky,
Than shoots the current hurtling from his bow.
What pearls of mist his temples crown and strew
His flowing locks, his locks that glisten wet
And white where time shakes down its ancient snow!
Yet shines more radiant still his coronet
When on that brow the sun his seven gems has set.

Fast hold his wingèd steeds their rushing flight,
Or poise in air above the awful steep;
While glints his mottled livery on the light,
And rose-cut brilliants from his bosom peep,
As doth a belt of night the heavens sweep
And dash its star-foam o'er the milky-way;
And, when the precipice his coursers leap,
Shakes not the beaten earth beneath their play,
While fires internal feel their hoofs and dance and
sway?

Now dies the distant thunder on the ear,—
 And Proteus-like he doth new image take :
 He lays aside his gold and azure here,
 To don the dappled coat of ocean-snake,
 With creamy whiteness falling, flake by flake,
 Adown the sea-green lustre of his hide ;
 Then moves he swiftly, proudly to the lake,
 While o'er my fancy, snake-like, visions glide,
 For on his scaly back, behold, the centuries ride !

Oh, thou canst tell, eternal, awful tide,
 What forces tore or wore this limy grave.
 Did some fierce Samson tear earth's jaws so wide,
 And lay these rocks thy stony path that pave,
 Or did the ceaseless ages beat and lave
 Their prison with the fragile surf of time
 Until a course was eaten by the wave—
 When lake to lake sent forth a watery chime,
 And thou, O Stream, new-born, beganst thy march
 sublime ?

Thy lips do swallow up my tiny voice,
 While round me gathers awe as calm and chill
 As thine own mist, and yet do I rejoice
 In thee, O boist'rous emblem of the will ;
 For thine the gush of life, the buoyant thrill

Of joy untamed, youth's laughter high and free.
Then on! and sing the song that mocks at ill:

The sigh, the storm, the agony shall be
Unknown until thy waters clasp the mournful sea.

Ah! type of time, thy surge the billowy crush
Of centuries—I, gazing o'er the brink,

Seem borne along the seething flood, the rush
Of years. Nay, doomèd river; thou must sink

Into the infinite, and it shall drink
Thee up; while I unmoved may hear thy tide

In tumult rolling at my feet, nor shrink
To see thy fateful waves, but view them glide
With all a mortal's sadness, an immortal's pride.

Life.

TO be, to conquer and to bow,
To let sweet Patience light the brow
And live within the awful now.

To look on Virtue's front of snow
Till ev'ry thought the heart doth know
Shall to her perfect image grow.

Within the breast God's shrine to raise,
And when a brother's light decays,
Renew his torch at our own blaze.

To bear three score of years and ten
A heart so warm 'twill flame again
From every chilling touch of men.

To clear from human eyes the dust,
To melt from human hearts the crust,
To cleave from human wills the rust.

Truth's trump to blow so fast and high
That hurrying notes leap out and fly
Here—there—and all across the sky.

To face the desert bare and black,
To fright the wolves of terror back,
And thro' the trackless trace a track.

Death.

TO bore life's heart, as fools oft bleed
The maple's heart, that it may feed
With lifetime's sap a moment's greed.

To sport with Vice, as child might risk
The horrid light that burns, a disk
Of death, in eye of basilisk.

To heap our shrine with fuel rare,
And guard its flame with jealous care
Until it dies for lack of air.

To wall the bosom 'gainst the storms,
And 'gainst the beam that fondly warms,
Till mildew o'er the spirit forms.

To stand where glows the conflict hot
With folded arms, that battle not,
But in their joints ignobly rot.

To stifle in the aching throat
A carol clear, whose humblest note
Some lip in lonely hour might quote.

To weigh the breath against the soul,
To flee when scowling dangers roll,
To shun the wave and strike the shoal.

Byron.

O SOUL Promethean! Heart of Ætna fire!
The sea thy brother, god-like art thy sire,
The world thy song, humanity thy lyre.

O fitful Light, one breathless hour unfurled,
That shook'st thy comet glories o'er the world,
Ere into the blue infinite wast hurled.

We touch thy page—and feel the hot blood start,
We feel the mingled pulse of life and art,
We feel thee climb the Alp-lands of the heart.

O poesy that hath its root in blood,
The luscious flower of Passion's ruby bud!—
A gulf-stream speeding thro' the world's chill flood.

O life! the fruit of Sin with Beauty wed,
O many-colored life, where Passion bled
O'er genius' milk-white stars a guilty red.

O life whose morn was hotter than our noon,
Whose mournful waves obeyed Love's madd'ning moon,
Or swelled and foamed 'neath Hatred's black monsoon.

O life that teachest from thy little span
That creature-gods do never fill nor can,
With restful joy the restless being man.

Leaves.

OCTOBER, 1876.

THE pulse of Summer sinketh low,
And, rushing from the icy pole,
Come shrieking winds. Ah! well I know
'Tis they my maple-leaves that stole
Twelve months ago, and every breeze
Their royal vesture from the trees
That strips, strips something from my soul;

For I have loved their blooms, and seen
New glories fledged for glories flown—
The yellow bud to living green,
The green to dying purple grown,
A maple sunset: we were kin
By sympathy, I felt, and in
Their life wrought something of my own.

In spring our hearts, like maples, bud
With tender hopes. The summer through

They brightly wave and drain our flood
Of life, then sadly fade ; for who
Feels not each year an inner death,
When drift the leaves on autumn's breath,
Or spangle earth with gory dew ?

Ah, me ! the world is lorn and old,—
And Nature loves no more her child,
There's naught that seems not dark and cold ;
The clouded sky, that yester smiled,
Beats down to-day my leaden wings,
When I aspire, and rudely flings
My thoughts, like leaves, on tempests wild.

After the Centennial.

THE princes gone who sat around thy board,
Columbia, and drank the century's health,
While fast the new wine of the West was poured,
And sighed to view thy wealth—
A golden hoard—

Why, country mine, dost sit in tearful woe,
Upon the day that crowns thee bride of Time?
Why droops this hour thy beauteous head so low,
Ere dead the bell's sweet chime,
The altar's glow?

It is the shriek of Freedom 'neath the fangs
Of pride and hate, the plaint of injured Law,
The plea of baffled Justice, as she hangs
Her brow in shame, that draw
Thy tears and pangs.

The air which freemen breathe seems dense with doom;
No patriot laughs to-day, while Murder drains

The blood of the oppressed, and in the gloom
Of night some hand profanes
Our martyr's tomb.

Go we to Lexington, where late we burned
Our incense—tears of joy! Now shame we'll weep,
And ask "the seven," if vain a king they spurned;
If vain their names we keep
In hearts inurned.

Tell them, above Potomac's towering bank
Who slumber, all for naught their sacred toil;
Say—foul oppression ripens red and rank
Upon the very soil
Their blood that drank.

Frost Work.

MY heart
Has windows; and their panes
Shone once with fancy's liquid dew,
In shapes and views
More rich than temple stains
Of art.

Chill blows
The world. Its winds it dashed
In fury 'gainst the pictured scroll
Of my warm soul:
Fruits, ferns and flowers flashed—
And froze.

Device
More grand what eye hath seen?
A path that mounts through flowers and trees,
The clouds to seize,
By light of stars whose sheen
Is ice.

A place
Of birds, wing-tipped with fret
Of frost, that keep their frozen May ;
And in the spray
Of stars is sweetly set
A face.

Mayhap
I loved—and cherish now—
That face, and strove for it to gain
That high domain—
With captured stars that brow
To wrap.

While storms
Rage round me fierce, I gaze
Upon this frost-work of the heart,
And sad tears start
Before this holy maze
Of forms.

O arts
Of angels, we would fain
Have heaven fashioned in the mold
Of fancies old—
Of things that silver-vein
Our hearts.

Neum Ahi.

LESS sweet by far, I ween,
The garden's fragrance than the breath that
blows
From yon blue violet that meekly grows
For *me* 'mid grasses green.
More beauty lives and dies in meanest gem,
By flashes, if for *me* its opal sheen,
Than burns in diadem
Of kings. And I have seen
My own pale star 'mid brighter stars; for them
Shall I *my* star contemn?

Shells.

THE sunlight creeps, the sunlight flees
O'er shells upon my table strown.
O shells, ye are some distant sea's
Young reveries—dreams dreamed in stone,
The painted caskets of a moan.

Ye are his day-dreams, richly fed
With hope and joy, and when ye died,
The soul that could not keep its dead
Did cast you out on sorrow's tide,
And sorrow told what shame would hide.

Ye wrecks of fancies unfulfilled,
I may not know what Ocean planned—
What palace for his soul to build
Of shells, ere broke the vision grand,
And white lips laid you on the sand.

Dead poems, sealed against mine art,
Mute thoughts that round to Nature's rhyme,
Doth not a sigh from Ocean's heart
Along your cells make funeral chime?
It doth, and shall thro' all of time.

The April Wedding.

ONCE April joined a flower with June,
While winds shrieked out a bridal tune,
And wept the pitying cloud.
Ill-omened match! ill-fated bride!
March slew the lover at her side,
And tender May, ere summer-tide,
Prepared the flower a shroud.

The Within.

FAITH turns the world to wine and bread,
And only pangs the heart doth toll
When Faith lies dead
Upon the soul.

I've seen Earth's bosom parched with drought
And stripped of life ; yet souls embraced
By arid doubt
Show sadder waste.

Dost fear when beacons sink in night ?
More black thy soul than rayless sea
If beacon-light
Expire in thee.

Oh ! sad the sea-gale's weary gust,
And sad the sea-bird's weary notes
When, wrecked, thy trust
O'er heart-waste floats.

'Tis naught should birds for aye depart,
And summers flee to ne'er return,
If in the heart
Love's solstice burn.

When shrink these rays in wintry death,
Thou'lt shiver ever in the air
Of storms whose breath
Makes Arctic there.

As frigid breeze sweeps flood and pool
Till plates of ice their waves invest,
So life may cool
The fervid breast.

Be welcome, frost, though you should hide
Our pulses, if some current hot
Within us glide
That freezeth not.

Believe a God doth calmly wait,
When beacons pale, believe they shine,
Theirs treason's fate,
Faith's harvest thine.

Lothario.

I THINK the brook the breeze
Doth love; for smiles that flash and then retreat,
His airy wit and wanton frolics greet,
His antics in the trees;
And when he bends a trembling kiss to steal
With saucy grace, the murmurous laugh he sees
And hears, doth all reveal.
But he is false and flees,
Forgetful now, away on noiseless heel,
By blushing flower to kneel.

Dawn Delayed.

LIFE, thou art a darksome valley ;
But the hills that o'er thee lean
Bathe them in eternal sheen.
There the baffled sunbeams rally ;
Thence into the vale they sally.

Darkness is the gloom of dying ;
Sunlight is the truth we crave,
That o'er man's forgotten grave
God keeps sentry,—this replying
To each voice 'mid shadows crying.

Let me, skyward creeping, dashing,
Linger half-way up the height,
Where the morning meets the night,—
Bright blades on black bucklers clashing,
Sun-darts thro' Night's squadrons flashing.

I would seize a shining quiver,
From the armory of the sun,

Drop its arrows one by one,
Till they fell a golden river
Where sad mortals grope and shiver.

When will truth with lambent rafter
Span th' Avernus where we dwell?
When will life's strong anthem swell,
Mixed with seraph song—and laughter?
Down the slopes of the hereafter?

See! The crimson dawn is stealing
Through the thickets of the sky.
See! th' effulgence of his eye
Wafts a halo and a healing,
Gently falls on mortals kneeling.

Shreds of Reverie.

SOMETIMES the world doth shift its hue,
And something old seems passed away ;
We meet to-days that never knew,
Or have forgot their yesterday ;
We breathe the air of other hope,
And other stars send down a ray
Across the path whereon we grope.

Experience writeth on the heart's white page
More in an hour than Fancy in an age.

If poet thou, above the surge of song
Thy storm-winged soul sublimely sweeps along.

The glory of a face once glimpsed may make
The humblest life heroic for its sake.

Plastic in thy hand and still,
Fate awaits thy touch of skill—
Life's the image of the will.

Their brows alone are in the clouds
Whose feet still press the earth.

Hast felt the sense of sad, proud loneliness,
When strayed thy path from other men's afar?
Hast walked at night with none thy steps to bless—
Save God within a little peace to shed,
And overhead
A star?

Diem Perdidimus.

'TIS fated thus,
If arm relax while Heaven lifts its goal
In sight, the stone of Sisyphus
Back on our toiling souls
Forever rolls.

How like a lark
Blithe conscience in the morn a carol trills.
'Tis noon, 'tis shadowy eve, and hark!
Her voice the spirit chills
Like whippoorwill's.

With flame and spark
'Neath resolution's torch our souls aspire;
Then gusts of storm and gusts of dark
Ride down the sky in ire
And quench our fire.

What mountain high—
What depth, have we not sworn to scale—to sound,

For flowers—for pearls, then from the sky
To sweep—or the profound
To rise—encrowned ?

By ocean sands
We've lingered, lingered where the mountain towers
And dreamed of crowns, while braver hands,
From sky's and ocean's bowers,
Brought pearls, brought flowers.

E'en while we grope
Where night o'er buried vows and pledges looms,
Our lifted wings shoot gleams of hope,
Like fire-flies 'mid the glooms
Above men's tombs.

We would that God
Remembered throbbing aspirations, not
Their fruits, remembered that abroad
We cast some seeds, forgot
That they did rot.

May Morning.

WINTRY sunrise, like an ember,
Glow in skies as ashes gray;
But the hectic of December
Is not like the blush of May.

Hark! the oriole's first matin
Stirs the morning's prayerful calm;
Never saintly maid in Latin
Chanted half so sweet a psalm.

Flowers in every mystic chamber
Beams dissolve and dews refine,
Turning light to rose and amber,
Turning water into wine.

Through the apple-boughs are breaking
Vernal snow-flakes into sight,
Nature's torpid soul, awaking,
Blossoms into green and white.

Winters freeze the tunes of throistles,
Stifling Summer's banquet call;
Then your gourmands grow apostles,
Snows make penitents of all.

Vain our spirits' proud endeavor
Out of Nature's folds to rise;
Spring's returning presence ever
Draws us captive from the skies.

When athwart the nerve's clear prism
Drifts a hue or tone intense,
Soul forgets the winter's schism,
Bows to feel the kiss of Sense.

'Mid this peaceful panorama
Stand our lives deformed and mean.
Heav'n and Earth prepare a drama,
Man's personæ, Heaven's scene.

We're the actors; Heav'n's still magic
Drops the curtain, shifts the play,
While our lives beat cold and tragic
'Gainst the glories of a May.

Spirit, be thou taught of Matter,
By the love the robin saith,

By the rain-drops' pitying patter,
By the jonquil's holy breath.

Oh! the mystery that bideth
Under all the masks of things,
Heart whose life thro' rosebud glideth,
Heart whose joy the songster sings!

Heart of Nature, I would feel Thee
Beating 'gainst this heart of mine,
Through the glories which conceal Thee
Sink into Thy peace Divine.

A Farewell.

YE are my friends ; and in your eyes
My eyes translate the love ye feel,
Mine ear translates it in your sighs,
My hand in pressures warm and leal.
Oh! could we but the world ensnare
With love like this—a love so rare,
Forever haughty hearts would kneel.

We've gathered oft to eat—to drink—
The thought that feeds—the mirth that cheers,
To ponder life, of death to think,
To weep 'mid laughter, laugh 'mid tears ;
And every cherished voice will float,
Like some old song's heart-echoed note,
Adown the path of after years.

Then ye to me and I to you,
Within the conflict's roar and flash,

Will be a presence dear and true—
Will be a voice above the crash
Of storms that shout the conscience dumb,
Of storms that smite the conscience numb,
As hurricanes do smite the ash.

Now who before the gusts would quail,
So that he face them not alone ?
For never yet victorious gale
Hath o'er a prostrate hero blown,
If 'mid the blackness and the strife,
He felt a life that fed his life,
He felt a hand that clasped his own.

Yet when we part, will not the snows
Of this cold earth, while storm-winds shout,
Drift into many a breast that glows
With friendship's fires and put them out ?
Will all the sacred altar keep,
While frosts of age thro' crevice creep ?

Ah ! some in roadside drifts will sink,
Where winds will spread our winding sheet ;
And some press grandly on, nor think
Whose forms lie hid beneath their feet ;
And some at last will wander here,
Perhaps, to shed an old man's tear.

Yea, some may scale on bleeding knees
Fame's mount to fame's eternal snows,
May leap the cataract and seize
On glory's edge its pallid rose.
Well, if the flower they fondly clasp
Dies not within the cheated grasp.

The purple draught will any sip
Which floats in Passion's chalice now ?
Or haste to press with burning lip
The scarlet fruit on pleasure's bough ?
Who'll pluck a rainbow-petaled sin,
Nor hear the serpent hiss within ?

Stay! Did I say this world's bleak snows
Should into many a heart intrude ?
'Twas false ; our flame no winter knows,
Not ours the love that, dolphin-hued,
Shows bright to-night, at morn expires,
No snows shall drift above our fires,
Though blasts without may riot rude.

Yet how diminutive the love
That doth but shade a score of friends !
That never spreads its boughs above
The drooping multitude, nor sends
Each day new rootlets lithe and free
Into the soil like banyan tree,
And evermore its arms extends.

Then, like an earnest brotherhood,
We'll seize our swords and drop our foils ;
We'll love the true, we'll seek the good,
We'll sing to life's mad billowy broils
A song of life till disappears
Men's frown in smiles, their smile in tears.
O humankind, thou need'st our toils.

For One whose words thou wilt not scorn
(And oh! methinks the world *He* knew),
Looked forth upon the whitening corn,
And said the laborers were few.
And they are few to-day who break
His bread and pour his love to slake
The thirst of Gentile and of Jew.

The world hath work for who hath wit,
Or who can pity souls that ache,
Or who will write a word unwrit,
Or who will die for conscience's sake.
Before us lies a sounding fray ;
We consecrate ourselves to-day,
To-morrow brand and shield we take.

And when each night the trumpets call,
While Truth proclaims some victory hers,
Come we in pride or not at all,
We bear away no broken spurs.

Far better on the field to lie,
Beneath the monumental sky,
Where Glory lays *her* worshippers.

Not all the monuments that rise
O'er graves, are clay, which Time doth fling
Low as the clay it glorifies;
For flowers from out a tomb may spring,
To speak for lips now mute below,
And swept to earth by Time, they strow
A fadeless fragrance o'er his wing.

The deed we do, the life we live,
The thought we think, the fire we feel,
The work we will, the gift we give,
The faith we found, the hurt we heal,
Translated into something strange,
That cannot die, that cannot change,
Shall stir the world with clarion peal.

And now farewell; yet 'mid the heat
And faintness of the desert waste,
Should friendship's cordial, pure and sweet,
Bring back the smiles which toil has chased—
The wine of strong fraternal trust,
All purified from froth and must
Of youth, that mar its perfect taste.

Let's plant an Eden in our breasts,
Where we may walk again with God ;
Where birds of Paradise their nests
May build, and send their psalms abroad ;
Where we the sweetened earth may till,
Beneath the tree of good and ill.

And in that garden bird will be,
Called Memory ; at eventide
She'll sing a pleasant lay to thee :
'Tis friendship's lay, and there will glide
Upon the song-stream's rippling flow,
One richest note, *the long ago*.

Builders.

BENEATH the Caribbean waves,
Where few and faint the sunbeams smile,
Wee builders rear the architraves
Of some majestic pile.

The toiling insect turns to stone,
The monumental tree doth rise,
And ne'er it adds a coral zone
Save as an insect dies.

It lifts the billows from its head,
It gathers sunbeams in its boughs,
And 'gainst its twigs of white and red
Huge navies grate their prows.

A sound from out its heart doth creep,
That floats its stony leaves along,
A Memnon's statue in the deep,
That turns its voice to song.

Within existence's sombre flow,
 Along the line of truth's dim ray,
Our human hands are rearing slow
 Some pillar to the day.

We build our souls into a reef,
 That rises through the ages sure ;
'Tis red with joy, 'tis white with grief,
 Life's currents wash it pure.

Let ocean beat its flinty base,
 And dash against its crest sublime,
It laughs the tempest from its face,
 It spurns the shocks of time.

Yes ; something deathless we bequeath :
 Each deed divine, each word devout,
Made hearts and lips of men, do breathe
 A tender gospel out.

'Tis grand to change the silent will
 To acts, to perish in the night
And leave a monument that still
 Gropes upward to the light.

Summer Noon.

A STRETCH of green, midsummer's green;
A stretch of blue, midsummer's blue;
A cloud between;
And, peeping through
Its drowsy folds, a summer sun;
A swallow flitting overhead,—
And Nature's humble feast is spread;
I scan her bounties one by one.

What beauty hath the field or sky?
Can sunburnt sky or sunburnt field
To heart or eye
A rapture yield?
Yon cloud dissolves in midday beams,
The desert heavens, dead and drear,
Hang o'er a landscape scorched and sear,
And profitless all nature seems.

Stay! sunburnt vault and sunburnt vale,
Whose patient gaze the spirit jars,
 Shall bid me hail
 Their fruits and stars;
For Earth shall smile through sheaves of wheat,
And Night shall sprinkle stars like dew
White-frosted, o'er the lawn of blue—
Fit carpet for an angel's feet.

O Earth, that wait'st thy harvest-day,
O Sky, that bidest evening-time,
 Teach man, I pray,
 A faith sublime,
Whose calm life's summer never mars,
A faith that views ere it achieves
The riches of unripened sheaves,
The glory of unblossomed stars.

Bird, Lute and Cloud.

MOORE.

A HUMMING bird,
That hovered o'er the honey-suckle's cup,
By breezes stirred,
And dreamed 'mid mists of fragrance, dipping up
Rich draughts with its voluptuous bill,—
Such draughts as burn in Nature's still.

KEATS.

A tender lute,
Suspended where the gales and zephyrs blow,
That waited mute
Till life's strange music o'er its strings should flow,
Then with its measures faint and strong
Did mingle strains of finer song.

SHELLEY.

A cloud, that sank
Its snowy spirit in the gorgeous west,
And bathed and drank,
While red and amber rivers crossed its breast,
And, in the sun's fierce life immersed,
Forgot its life in slaking thirst.

A Vindication.

THOU say'st ambition's coarse desire
Feeds every poet's lamp that burns
A shore-light by this waste of years.
Hast never heard of spirit-fire,
Self-fed, unquenchable, that yearns
To pour its life where Night careers ?

Tell mountain streamlet that for fame
It leaps from out yon rocky shelf,
And bears its chanting waves along ;
Then tell the spirit for a name
It leaps from out the rock of self,
And lifts its waves of torrent song.

What though the mist that wreathes the rill
Doth catch the flattery of the sun,
And when he smileth, smiles again ?
What though the vanity that still

Clouds sweetest lives,—some vict'ry won,
Doth glisten to the praise of men ?

Thou hast not felt the vital start,
Thou hast not felt the throb intense,
Thou hast not felt the joyous pain—
Of thought imprisoned in the heart,
Of thought that booms upon the sense,
Of thought that lightens in the brain.

Thy childless soul hath never known
The mystic love of holy Art,
The mystic birth of heav'nly Speech ;
From thee no wingèd word hath flown
To warm the world with seraph heart,
With cherub tongue the world to teach.

Tyndall to the Singing Flame.

While pronouncing a Passage from the Faery Queen.

LISTEN now to Spenser,
Ah, thou heedest well.
Naught could be intenser
Than thy raptured spell,
Nodding, dancing, singing with the metric swell.

Yes, her lips are wreathing
Something like a chant;
Fast and deep her breathing,
As when bards do pant
With seraphic—Tyndall, this is poets' cant.

Warbling with such frequency,
Does thy voice translate
Into mellow sequence
All he doth narrate,
Tales of war and venture, scenes of joy and state?

But thou bowest oddly :
*Truth** thou didst not heed,—
 Is there aught more godly ?
Silver wins thy meed.

Art thou then like mortals prone to vulgar greed ?

May be when *thou* speakest,
 In thy tongue unknown,
 Silver is *thy* weakest,
 Truth thy open tone.

Nonsense ! light selects the waves that suit its own.

Never shone completer
 Rainbow thro' the shower,
 Never glowed a sweeter
 Blush on passion-flower
 Than thou shinest, glowest, elfin of an hour !

Oh, for some new Spenser
 Science's fields to glean !
 Mysteries immenser
 Here than fairy scene.
 Thou, gay flame, art fairer far than faerie queen.

Never yet hath fairy,
 Never yet hath queen,

* The flame is indifferent to close vowels, but sensitive to hissing sounds.

With a gesture airy,
Changed her robes of sheen
Into such a crimson, violet or green.

May be thou art spirit,
Thing I cannot name :
'Tis not I that fear it.
Is it not the same,
Whether flame be spirit, whether spirit flame ?

What is it doth win thee
From thy station proud ?
Spenser's soul within thee ?
Speak it not aloud ;
Souls but die, "as vanish streaks of morning cloud."

But I grow a poet.
What should here astound ?
Doth not Science show it,
Hath not Tyndall found,
Sound and light are motion, poems modes of sound ?

Leaves.

OCTOBER, 1877.

A SLOW decay comes o'er the year,
Its signals o'er the maple creep,
The emerald leaves grow yellow-sere
With amber, such as sea-birds weep,
While here and there the amber turns
To garnets, and the garnet burns
Itself to russet rich and deep.

It is the loveliness of death.

Such beauty robes the soul, I ween,
When in its grasp of early faith
Its foliage dies, if tall, serene,
Upborne against the smiting arm,
It throws o'er every woe the charm
Of royal tints before unseen.

Yes; there's a power in feebleness,
And there's a glory of decay;
These crumpled leaves, in fading, bless
The eye with a supernal ray.

And still I mourn, when pines the grove,
As when there comes in face we love
A wrinkle, never kissed away.

So, Autumn rage, I court thee not.
I'd rather bear my vernal hues
The whole year through than feel them rot,
Mere theme for some didactic muse ;
I shrink from character that grows
By life's decay, by tears and woes,
By what we yield and what refuse.

Wise maple, did it shake its flowers
Upon the earth ere tempests rise,
Shake down its joys in painted showers,
Like bevvies of dead butterflies,
Like rainbows trailing through the air,
Ere robber winds come forth to tear
The crown it yields with many sighs.

'Tis well, O Tree, that we should ope
The buds of fancy o'er the tomb,—
That thou shouldst leaf, that I should hope,
If I my dream and thou thy bloom
Resign ere wanton gale and grief
Strip radiant hope and radiant leaf
From heart and bough with shriek of doom.

The Medium.

UPON his tripod see the medium sit.
The Corybantes 'round him madly flit ;
While Prophecy an empty riddle weaves,
And winds disport them with the sibyl's leaves ;
The Yankee Pythoness begins her toils,
And in young Athens, lo ! the mystic caldron boils.

Yet in cathedral or in Turkish mosque,
In darkened circle or in heathen bosque,
While trembling hands reach up to the unseen,
'Tis well to bow with reverential mien :
Where floats an anthem or up-soars a prayer,
Thou treadest holy ground, thou breathest sacred air.

Man's worship lives in many an odd disguise,
His uncouth Babels pierce the lucent skies,
His altars groan, like Cain's, with fruits unblest,
His spirit roams the deluge, seeking rest ;

And yet 'mid dark idolatries may hide
Some verity most radiant when the most denied.

We thank *thee*, medium, for a lesson old,
New preached, a truth freed from engrossing mold—
The truth that Death strips not from man his all,
That Life weaves bridal garments from her pall,
That every star which sets in sorrow here,
Above some new horizon mounteth, peaceful, clear.

And for another lesson strangely true,
Part ours, part thine, part old, and partly new,
That mind and matter are but flower and bud,
That life is one, though severed by a flood,
That life ascends to life, and death is birth,
And Heaven's face the lit, transfigured face of Earth.

We thank thee for a secret treasure brought
To light, which mind shall yet transmute to thought;
Base earth that in the crucible's hot breath
Shall yield its gold to Science and to Faith,
Though thou, enraptured with a drossy store,
Seest not the waiting jewel prisoned in thine ore.

O ye that in the grave-damp wildly grope,
And chase an *ignis fatuus* of hope,
That strive and strive in fleshly grasp to clutch
Those subtle things transcending sight and touch,

The realm ye seek, seeks you, in shadows hid,
And on the eye dawns grandest when unsought, unbid.

O ye that cannot wait the vision blest,
The hymn of victory, the chant of rest,
That stretch your arms across the black abyss,
And sigh for angel love and angel kiss
Until all palpable your dream-form stands
Before you, to caress you with the touch of hands;

Though stronger than your sight the shades of fate,
Your lost ones live, and, living, loving, wait;
Though not with clash of instruments, nor yet
Obedient to the sorcerous planchette,
They visit us, yet in some dearer way
They come, and in our souls leave many an angel-ray.

Confidence.

REPRESS the moan
And play the hero while the day-beams keep,
Though on thy pillow tossing lone,
Pain's stifled cry should creep
Athwart thy sleep ;

And fast, more fast
Come hurrying fragments of some old refrain—
A music from the sad, sad past
Into the voice of pain
That poured its strain.

Be gay ! be gay !
The world cares not what blight marks brow and cheek,
What vultures on the vitals prey,
And their dark mission wreak
With soulless beak.

'Tis better far
To sit uncomforted at night and morn
Than leave the house of grief ajar
To hear, through lattice borne,
The laugh of scorn.

And in the heart
Of that large pity thou would'st fain partake
Doth lurk contempt, whose cruel smart
Is keener than the ache
Thou wouldst unmake.

Yet it may be,
When in the loyal bosom of a friend
Our secret rests, we breathe more free,
More tranquilly we bend
To life's great end.

Unshodden they
Should be, uncovered, whom the soul allows
To enter where o'er gods of clay,
With cypress-shaded brows,
It daily bows.

The right to know
A heart comes only after faithful years,
Thro' sympathy with joy and woe,
Thro' banishing of fears
And wiping tears.

Ideals.

I DEALS are mist the sight that mars ;
Across youth's twilight morn they run—
Mere fogs that gather 'neath the stars,
And shun
The hot gaze of the sun.

Life is too long for thing of earth
To stand forever on the skies ;
Too short for fallen human worth
To rise
Up to its forfeit prize.

With shattered idols all the years
Are strewn. O perished forms of men !
We give you all a meed of tears,
And then—
The poor heart builds again.

Yet trembling builds, nor builds so high ;
As, when Judæa did restore
Her fane, it awed the templed sky
 No more
 With majesty of yore.

As well bring back the Parthenon
Time's ravished lip hath kissed away,
As re-create a dream that's gone,
 Or stay
 Perfection's slow decay.

The widowed soul, like Hindoo wife,
Burns on the pyre where Love doth lie
Yet like the Phoenix finds its life.
 And why ?
 Again to love and die.

The type that once was a belief
Comes back to haunt us with its spell,
Comes vainly back to stay our grief,
 And tell
 Us that it never fell.

O resurrected type, thou ghost
Of that which was, and died ! a while
I worshiped too. The spell is lost ;
 Thy smile
 Can never more beguile.

Thou'rt but a thing of beauty now.
And yet, as Meneläus might
Have bent o'er Helen's pictured brow
 Each night,
 To drink with mixed delight

Its gemmy rays, the cheated heart
Bends o'er its treacherous ideal,
And revels,—till the old-time smart
 Doth steal
 Through veins that still can feel.

And yet these visions of our trance,
That trip the brain as elves the lawn,—
These fays that flee as we advance,
 With dawn
 Into the darkness gone,

I think are glimpses, through the veil,
Of sprites that lurk in heav'nly glades.
It is our eyes, not they, that fail ;
 Man fades ;
 They're essence, we but shades.

Rain at Sea.

SOME hurrying cloud that in the blue
Hath dipt its wing, shakes off the dew,—
And all the heav'n is ocean too.

Some foam-wave sky-ward tost, I vow,
Hath caught a rainbow on its brow,—
And all the sea is rainbow now.

Christmas.

THE thought that throbs in Christendom's glad bells,
Its voices and its myriad organ keys ;
That stills the heart of trade on ocean swells,
And points us to a world upon its knees,
Must be a thought most catholic and sincere,
A thought this mocking century doth revere.

This is the soul of every bell's refrain,
The burden of each anthem's happy peal,
The text of texts, Art's universal strain,
This hushes commerce, bids the proud world kneel,
This the majestic thought—and ne'er the scorn
Of men can overwhelm it—*Christ was born*.

We leave the theologian's wordy strife,
Dost doubt the dogmas of a Saviour's death ?
Yet thou hast human interest in his life,
For he hath dignified all flesh, all breath :
Not Calvary, nor Olivet ; from them
We turn this morn and gaze toward Bethlehem.

Thou art a man ; and, whatsoe'er thy creed,
Thou canst not hold such life of little worth,
Whate'er it be to thee that Christ did bleed,
Seek not to 'scape the meaning of his birth ;
That life to which the nations bend to-day
Is all too grand for thee to laugh away.

He came and went, but time cannot erase
This word : " Ye're brothers, and your father, God.'"
Lo ! empires sink that never saw his face,
And deserts bloom his feet have never trod ;
From Bethlehem an inspiration springs
Which wafts humanity upon its wings.

For he hath taught the stamm'ring tongue of man
The speech of cherubs, joy and peace and love ;
And he hath half revealed our Father's plan
To link the severed Earth with the Above.
So we may teach this language : to the soul
Sin-stricken we may whisper, " Be thou whole."

And he hath pointed o'er the sunset waves,
Where Heav'n, like Venice, skirts the purple seas,
While life's eternal tide its mansions laves,
And o'er the lute's sweet pulses floats life's breeze.
Is this mirage ? Is there mirage of sound ?
Mirage of music, joyous and profound ?

Were faith a mist, were saints enraptured all
With a mirage, called Heaven, still, 'twere well
To view this skeptic generation fall
Before the chiming of a Christmas bell,
And unbelievers quaking at this hour,
As 'neath the pressure of some brooding power.

Life's fullness is its fullness of belief,
And doubt is but the mildew on the vine,
The blight that turns the early sap to grief,
And slays Spring's prophecies of fruit and wine;
For faith and knowledge after all are one—
'Tis but the rising and the risen sun.

There is an altitude whence thou may'st see;
May'st catch the lute-notes streaming from abroad;
But thou must hang upon the hallowed tree,
Must taste the hallowed suff'rings of thy God.
Then shall the cloud which billows o'er the grave
Roll back, as rolled the Red Sea's parted wave.

The Weavers and the Cupids.

EACH life doth lack some crowning grace ;
Perhaps of figure, or of face,
Or fortune's bounty, or the joy
Of cultured mind or cultured heart,
Or it may be the happy art
Which sways the bold and wins the coy.

Perhaps thou wantest but the peace
Christ gives when rebel tumults cease,
And Passion bears his gentle yoke ;
Or is't communion all divine
With something thine and wholly thine,
That knows the word thou'st never spoke.

God gives to angel hands to plait
Love-crowns, to winds of chance or fate
To waft them down. Hence it may be

That, spent with tearful striving, thou
Wilt view on some unworthy brow
The wreath the angels wove for thee.

O weavers, know ye not, nor reck?
Your fairest garlands oftimes deck
The brutal front, the bestial soul,
Recall these Cupids to the skies,
Or strike the bandage from their eyes,
Or tear your crowns from their control.

Too long, too long your sweetest gift
Upon the vagrant gales doth drift,
While skeptics laugh and cynics mock.
A purer gift then earthward flows
When winters weave their floral snows
For hungry sea and icy rock.

The sea in whose lascivious arm
The snow-flake melts to kisses warm,
And dies when for the last caressed;
The ingrate rock that never lifts
Its thanks to heaven for the gifts
Of snowy arms and loving breast.

And shall the heav'ns forever strow
With crowns of mingled fire and snow
Unstable water, frozen clay?

Shall not the thankless forehead turn,
Shall not the thankless bosom yearn
Toward skies as pitiless as they ?

Yes ; love betrayed, or love denied—
Shall be avenged, be satisfied—
There's vengeance in the Heart of Things;
And to betray, or to deny,
Is but, betrayed, denied, to die,
As scorpions die by their own stings.

Aneme and Elpis.

*Delivered before the Alumni of Syracuse University,
June 25, 1878.*

MNE.—“O times! O morals!” that the Sacred
Nine—

EL.—Forever you're citing that Horace of thine.

MNE.—My Horace! Were he thine as well as mine,
Perhaps he'd teach thee how to frame a line,
With easy pace, yet dignified and slow;
The Horace of our Pope and of Boileau.
But I was quoting then from Cicero.

EL.—Thy Pope he may be, but he wrote not for me.
My poet is Tennyson, though even he
Compares not with singers that yet are to be.
Still touched are his eyes with a coal from the
shrine

I've built to the Future, and things half divine
Sometimes on his sight their proportions outline.

MNE.—The muse of Tennyson's a dreamy elf.

EL.—But Pope is no poet, a jingler of pelf,
Called Philosophy, sordid and dry as yourself,
A philosophy laid, like his church, on the shelf.

MNE.—Oh, blasphemy ! against the church that bore
The virtues of Pascal and Thomas More,
Of Fénelon, of d'Assisi and e'en
The wisdom of Jerome and Augustine ;
The Church that guards Religion thro' the night
Of eighteen centuries, and from her height
Dispensed to men all they could bear of light ;
Made Rome a captive, snatched her lore and law
And half her art from the barbarian's maw ;
That saved the Jew's and Greek's rich heritage,
And willed them both unto a thankless age—

EL.—That butchered Coligni, and Latimer burned,
Hurled bulls at the comet, Copernicus spurned.

MNE.—Is Pope's philosophy to be unlearned ?
What will your Future teach ? No God ? No
soul ?

We live, we think, we die as atoms roll,
The ape our grandsire and the grave our goal ?
What faith ? Is't that which Comte has decreed ?
The worship of humanity indeed !
But where's the perfect man ? Is't Spencer ?
Bain ?
Or Huxley ? Hæckel ? Darwin ? Tyndall ?
Taine ?

The man of perfect heart and perfect brain ?
 Fill up thy Pantheon, but let thy Jove
 Be one who taught them all how atoms rove,
 Democritus ; then men will choose between
 Thy Abderite and my sweet Nazarene.

EL.—My God and thy pontiff, my Christ and thy saints,
 'Twixt worship that cleanses, and worship that
 taints ;

Thy Scotus, Aquinas, my Newton and Locke,
 Those building on sand, and these building on
 rock.

MNE.—My Raphael, Tintoretto, Angelo,
 Murillo, Dürer, Titian, Tasso
 And Dante, my Beethoven and Mozart—
 'Twixt these and thy—ah, yes ! thy coming art—
 Yea, Spenser, Milton, Scott thou must resign ;
 For all the Past doth love is mine—is mine.

EL.—My arts are far nobler than building in stone,
 Far nobler than marble and canvas have known
 My labors more lofty than friar can boast,
 Or bravest crusader on Palestine's coast ;
 My suff'rings more pure than the anchoress's groan,
 Or d'Assisi's agony, writhing alone ;
 My artists are Franklin and Smeaton and Morse,
 My palmer a Livingstone, knight Wilberforce,
 My martyr a Lovejoy—Truth's herald, Fame's
 corse.

Not rearing proud temples or goading the slave,
 Or slaughtering pagans, is glory I crave.
 In manhood grown taller, and womanhood too,
 In helots made freemen, in traitors made true,
 Is glory, the glory I crave and pursue.

MNE.—Your rights of man mean rights of monarchs
 crushed,

Authority o'erthrown, and peasants flushed
 With insolence, made rulers; aye, they mean
 Red bonnets, confiscation, guillotine.
 Your woman's rights—come, Aristophanes,
 Come, Juvenal, Molière, and paint me these.
 Say, have you ever by th' Ægean seas,
 Or Tiber, or the Seine, in bloomer ease,
 Beheld a female strive with Pericles
 In oratory, lead the legions on,
 Or in the pulpit rival Massillon?

EL.—The Grecian might cite you Aspasia's great name,
 And state in her lover's oration her claim;
 The Roman could tell you Zenobia's fame;
 The Frenchman would paint without mock'ry or
 shame

A shepherdess leading France's chivalry on
 With sermons excelling your famed Massillon.

MNE.—Seen women lawyers through your fora rush,
 That only blushed to think they e'er could blush?

EL.—Thou'rt bitter as Swift, but I pardon thee still.

Oh! why must my good be forever thy ill?

Could we only bury this passionate broil,

Thy Bible, my Science, thy Art and my toil

What foeman could conquer? what demon could
foil?

The past is a sunset, the future a dawn—

A sun not yet risen, a sun but just gone.

I would both might lumine New Eden's green
lawn!

MNE.—O Elpis, thou, that in thy dreamy eyes

A new earth paintest underneath new skies,

That Paradise we lost canst not despise.

EL.—An Eden more fair o'er the hill-tops I see,

Where man is forbidden the fruit of no tree,

Where knowledge and life intertwined are both
free.

Ah! seest thou not, through a rift in the cloud,

While earth is uplifted and heaven is bowed,

A promise that springs as Christ sprang from a
shroud?

There God is redeeming the vow that he vowed.

When man shall be glory-crowned, now labor-
shod,

Could Christ again conquer the cross and the clod,

We'd think that a mortal some Calvary trod,

Or rather we'll know every man as a god.

MNE.—Give me thy gaze, that God's hid plan perceives.

EL.—My eyes are my heart that sees not, but believes.

MNE.—I yield.

EL.— Not to me, but to Love and to Fate.

MNE—"The muse of History is love, not hate."

EL.—And Prophecy's muse hath the same divine freight

Thy tongue, O Hope,
Is honeyed with the dew of thine own heart,
And thou dost grope
'Mid errors, singing what thou seest and art.
Yet the loveliest fancy thy spirit hath kissed,
Shall grow pale when the real its glory hath shown,
When the long night of time shall surrender man's own,
And a world rolleth forth from the shadow and mist.

What though man's mind,
So long imprisoned by his heart, doth seek,
Now unconfined,
Upon his captor equal wrongs to wreak?
Short the conflict shall be betwixt feeling and sight;
For the God-beam is light and the God-beam is heat,
And nor knowledge nor worship alone is complete,
But the heart yearns for warmth, and the mind yearns
for light.

What though the path
Whereby man mounteth painfully and slow,

Is torn with wrath,
And liberated slaves to tyrants grow ?
For humanity's march, like the rush of a star,
Or the sweep of a sea on its desolate track,
In a strong wayward rhythm urged forward and back,
Ever points to some goal in the heavens afar.

Its shores and caves
The grand sea of humanity doth beat
In restless waves
That still advance and evermore retreat.
Yet—doth Tantalus cease ? or doth Ixion tire ?
It uplifts, like a giant in bonds, its white hands,
And the touch of its palms on the passionless sands
With the throes of its bosom is higher—and higher.

All storms and calms,
Are shouts and whispers of th' Eternal Voice,
That blend in psalms
When ear doth blend them with harmonious choice.
Then the æons of God fall in stateliest rhyme,
And the centuries cease the harsh discords they wage ;
For the ill of a day is the good of an age,
And the ill of an age is the good of all time.

A Story.

WAS it the touch of her fingers ? Was it the bliss
in her breath ?

Was it a music of accent ? Was it her fullness of faith ?
Gladly he listens and lingers ; springs his numbed
dream from its death.

Maybe an ode or a painting, maybe a mournful remark
Deeply had uttered his longing,—maybe a sigh from
its ark,
Like the dove, flying and fainting, winging the deluge
and dark.

Something had hinted of sorrow, dimly his woe had
revealed,—
Told of a life all too narrow, told of a secret con-
cealed,—
Told of an archer and arrow, told of a hurt never
healed.

Whether his woe had been real, Fancy or Truth had
betrayed,
Whether his myrtle had blossomed, he had been stripped
of its shade—
Loved he the true or ideal—loved he a myth or a
maid.

So the hid wound she had riven ; gently she'd bidden
and brief,
Modestly dropping her eyelids, bidden have strength
and belief,
Thoughtless of dart she had driven, thinking to shrive
him of grief.

Whence had her charter been given—boldly his woes
to invade ?
Was it a mission celestial, mission to bless or upbraid ?
Yes ; 'twas a whisper from heaven. Grateful he bowed
and obeyed.

Scars on the breast of a maple, rifts in the bark of a
beech—
Scars which the sunshine can flatter, rifts which the
breezes can reach,
Heal as the air of new April drops its sweet balm in
the breach.

Was it the touch of her fingers ? Was it the beauty
that brake

Out of her eyes as the moonlight softly doth leap from
the lake?

Something that flutters and lingers, becks him to wor-
ship and wake.

Did she perceive that a lightness rose in his heart as he
heard?

Did she perceive a numbed passion start 'neath the
wand of her word?

Saw she not beam a strange brightness, when the dull
cinders she stirred?

Ah! if she did, she was human. Heaven shall judge
her, not I.

Is it a lure to be loved and, not loving, to smile and to
sigh?

Well, if it be, she was woman; that is reproof and
reply.

* * * * *

Nature may gently caress us, lay her warm heart 'gainst
our own,

Yet, if alone she embrace us, wrings from our musing a
moan,—

Moonrays and perfumes oppress us, drinking their lush-
ness alone.

Nature, give me thy abysses, summits and tempest-
lashed tide,

When I joy's aches and its blisses may with some fond
soul divide,

When thy lips, clinging in kisses, first have kissed lips
at my side.

So by her side he was learning Nature's deep muse
more and more ;

Stars on the blue altar burning, wavelets that sobbed
on the shore

Mingled their plaint with his yearning, mingling their
radiance and roar.

Oh! 'tis a blissful communion! witching alliance in
Art!

Hand in hand drifting o'er dream-seas, scorning man's
compass and chart—

Only a step from your union of souls to the union of
heart.

Step he had recklessly taken. Did she ignore it? God
knows.

Views she the hope whose soft glory tinges the rill and
the rose ?

Hope from its shrine to be shaken, when the first blast
coldly blows.

He in refinements of thinking might with St. Thomas
contend,

But in refinements of feeling she did more subtly descend,
Never confusedly linking lover, affinity, friend.

He could drink deep of life's fancies, feel the best yearnings of youth,
But glimpsed the sky thro' a cloud-veil, looked on its rule as unruth;
She, with a maiden's romances, owned a deep trust in God's truth.

So for his light she was given; yet, as men frankly prefer
True-love to fairest evangel, strangely her errand did err;
When she would point him to heaven, he fell to hallowing her.

When she would talk of a striving after the infinite skies,
Mixed he with ev'ry aspiring thoughts of a princelier prize;
He would be saved by her shriving, making his Eden her eyes.

Voice like the voice of September, lips like the cherries of June

Ne'er were designed for our teachers; I their sweet
preaching impugn!
When they are mute, we remember only the singer and
tune.

Could we through glances that haunt us—through the
eye's warm, liquid wave,
Look where the soul, like a naiad, hides in some coral-
strewn cave,
Glances that cheat and enchant us, often would cease
to enslave.

When in fair cheeks float and hover heart-flames—red
jets from life's tide,
Signals some fire that uncover, gladness, shame, passion
or pride,
Let us be lenient to lover, should he too swiftly decide.

Ah! the presumptuous bosom well for its trust shall
atone,
Paying for joys it hath stolen out of the joys it doth
own.
Drink then their light till thou lose them, turning in
silence to stone.

If she had glimpsed his devotion through the thin veil
that it wove,

If she looked in where shy Passion still with its sighs
 feebly strove,
Well did she mask her emotion 'gainst the keen glances
 of love.

Proud swells the soul of Eve's daughter, when for her
 troth we entreat ;
Man, her betrayer, oppressor, captive now, falls at her
 feet,
Tasting the pains he hath brought her, craving her
 mercy. 'Tis meet.

Had he not willed, Schopenhauer, he had not suffered,
 you say.
Will is not all of life's power ; still the fierce pulses
 must play,
Tho' the will cringe, tho' it cower—vile as its coffin of
 clay.

Had he defied Love's imperium, Pain had not found
 him afresh.
Had he withstood, were he human—mingling of fire
 and of flesh ?
And he had lost the delirium of a brief month in his
 mesh.

Who on this thirsty Sahara cheated by any sweet thing,
Would from life's meagerness banish mem'ry of song-
 bird or spring,

Though the bright mere proved a Mara, and the shy
warbler took wing.

So while the years in grand column ope from their calyxes dim,
Still will he bless the glad nectar spilled as he bent o'er
its brim,
Holding Love's spell true and solemn, for it once hovered o'er him.

Hast thou not wept o'er some casket, where a crushed
jewel was laid?
Ah! thy gaze shrinks when I ask it; quivering voice
doth evade,
But thro' the mirth that would mask it stands the souls'
tempest betrayed.

Didst thou rise up from thy sorrow, clearing the débris
anew,
On a foundation less narrow rearing a temple more
true,
Roofed by God's measureless Morrow, walled by his
battlements blue?

Living, not dying's heroic, when the tired spirit would
sleep;
Pouring life's wine to the weary—only the bitter to
keep—

Scorning death's voice like a stoic, tho' its waves drift
still and deep.

* * * * *

Sunset—and richer, intenser glows the red goblet of
wine

Night to her purple lips presseth, while o'er her shadow-
wrapt shrine

Swings a gold cloud like a censer, wafting a vapor
divine.

And by the river he paceth, shunning a visage of fear,
While stranger gleams than of sunset melt in a duskness
more drear

Than down the changeful tide chaseth daylight's last
shimmering spear.

What is it falls like a twilight, gath'ring to grandeur of
gloom,

Speaks, ere the future has spoken: "Hope, be thou
draped for the tomb,"

Closes the soul's open skylight with a grim deadlight
of doom?

He felt that twilight—grief's token—drip its chill dew
on his soul,

He heard a sentence unspoken forth its dread rhetoric
roll,

He saw a barrier unbroken rise 'twixt his heart and its
goal.

Into the west em'rald-gated rolls the sun's parting display ;

Sighing while pain his sighs freighted, watched he the
gloaming's rich gray,

Till she whose witch'ry he waited came like the dawn
of a day.

Was it the touch of her fingers ? Was it a tremble or
tone ?

Was it an exquisite something, nameless, now faithless
and flown ?

Sadly he listens and lingers. Blast that was brewing
had blown.

An Epigram.

“**I**N every man,” says Sainte Beuve, “there lives
A poet who dies young.” Mine oft has sicken’d,
But ’mid his chills and fevers still survives,
By Flatt’ry’s timely cordial soothed or quickened,
And ever to the friendly breezes gives
New notes, by fresh disasters thinned or thickened ;
Still lives to sport with faun or weep with dryad,
To sing a pæan or a jeremiad,
Until ye’ll wish that he had died, or I had.

A Sonnet to M——.

'T WAS a glance with tear-dew bathed and bright'n-
ing,

Then thy face was tranquil as before ;

Yet my soul knows thine forever more,

Each revealed by sympathy's brief lightning.

What tho' Pride forbade the tears to start ?

What though Pride upon each gleaming ember

Scattered ashes ? Shall I not remember

That my heart once looked into thy heart ?

Not remember the imprisoned yearning,

When thine eye shone tender and divine,

Ere it shrank with drooping lid from mine,

As to hide its incandescent burning,

Ere the world rose up between our souls,

And the heart had covered up its coals ?

A Sonnet to the Future.

A DEDICATION OF YOUTHFUL MEMOIRS.

THOU that standest like some tall brunette,
Whose eyes shoot star-jets o'er her dusky charms,
Whose brow uplifts a crown of rubies, set
In night of hair, and holdest in thine arms
Time's legacies; the days that we have met,
But meet no more, we would to thee return,
Like faded flowers. O Future, do not spurn
These memories of things that haunt us yet;
But take this trust of dying scents and blooms—
Red roses of young passion, lily-leaves
Of aspirations, white as angel weaves,
And twist them into garlands for our tombs;
For tombs that will not ask above their clay
More than a wreath of days long passed away.

To a Goldfinch.

LIKE a spark of gold,
Flash thy winglets bold.
Little fellow-wand'rer
In life's mystery,
Art thou too a pond'rer
What this life may be ?

Thinking while thou singest, captive seeming free ?

While thy matin swells,
Like the water-bells
Which the brooklet ringeth,
I should vain express
Joy in me that springeth
From thy joyousness ;

Nobler bards have blessed thee ;—vain that I should
bless.

Birds have deeper ken
Than the love of men ;
Else their tunes were sadder,
And their wings less free.
Tell—and make us gladder—
What thy secrets be ;

Things the lark withheld from Shelley, tell thou me.

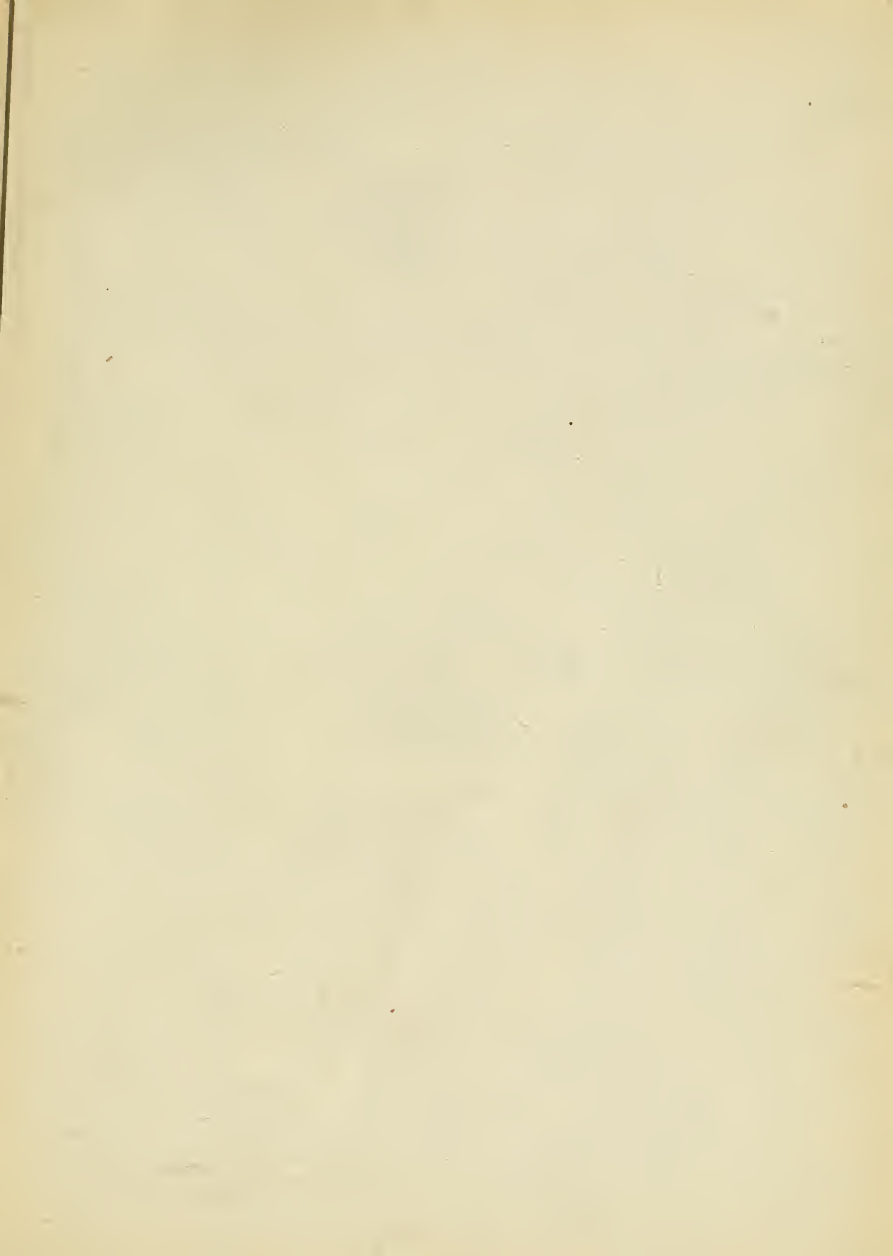
Shelley, like his lark,
Sought the cloud-caves dark,
Where his mystic rhymings
Swept th' eternal dome ;
Thy low, silver chimings
Make the earth their home ;—
And I too would carol where men's sad eyes roam.

If thou'rt more than mold—
Music set in gold—
Than a gleam of beauty,
Than a beam of song,
Know'st thou aught of duty ?
Know'st thou aught of wrong ?
Couldst thou wait some higher rapture, patient, strong ?

Would that we might meet
By the golden street !
Thou should'st be my lyrist,
When the harpers play ;
But if thou aspirest
Not beyond decay,
Still in this rapt spirit thou shalt live for aye.

AND now my soul grows autumn-cold;
Its leaves, with shudder of despair,
It drops to mix with other mold;
Yet one, perchance, will float the air,
More deftly traced, more softly dyed
With ripe, rich, red drops from life's tide,
And win brief glances here and there.

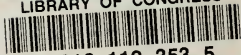
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